INDEPENDENCE HALL.

IT has been well said of individuals, that there exists no stronger incentive to merit than the recollection of a long line of distinguished ancestry, revived, it may be, by a gallery of family portraits, or the preservation of family relics. The Chinese are believed always to devote a room to the perpetuation of all kinds of ancestral associations, while the English, thanks to their feudal system, still consolidate and transmit their family mementos and heir looms.

There always have been those who scoff at that species of pride derived from fair lineage; but such raillery, in the main, is but an effort to decry a too conscious deficiency, or used as a cloak to "ape humility"—a cloak that no more conceals the true sentiments than did the assumption of his rags by the great cynic, whose real pride was plainly seen to peep through the very rents in his garments. As with individual families, so it is with nations.

We shall be told that the "genius of our institutions" is averse to fostering the former; but surely no such objection can be raised against the latter. The most austere *Hoi-polloi-ist* will concede that the greater the pride in the past history of our country, the surer the guarantee of patriotism in the future. To this end no means more effective can be devised than the establishment of a permanent *National Museum.* Such a practical mode of object instruction will continue to teach to all coming

generations of Americans the lesson learned in 1776, and about to be rehearsed in 1876—that in national unity lies our strength, of which State pride and local impulses are legitimate constituent elements. There can be no segregation into a civic of that which essentially forms a federal bond—the community of the past.

Assuredly, that past should not be permitted to bury its dead, or only be revivified by spasmodic celebrations of anniversaries of one hundred years. Let it rather be made an ever-present reality by the closest personal and historical associations. Let it be an ever-living witness, in whose voice the accents of departed patriotism may continue to utter, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

> The man that is not moved by what he reads,
> That takes not fire at their heroic deeds—
> Unworthy of the blessings of the free—
> Is base in kind and born a slave to be.

Unquestionably, the greatest national memorial in the history of the United States is Independence Hall—the birth-chamber of the Republic. Let us briefly glance at the events of the nativity.

Delegates from each colony—appointed, in some cases, by the existing legislative bodies, in others by committees of safety—had first met together in Carpenter's Hall for a defined purpose—to devise measures for uniform action in approaching their recognized sovereign by petition, and in order to obtain redress of grievances. Failing in these efforts, they returned to Philadelphia in the spring of 1775, with the anticipation of a prolonged session, when the hall used by "the representatives of the freemen of the Province of Pennsylvania" (hence the "State House") was assigned to them for their sittings. Thus it was that in that very hall, in June, 1775, on motion of Thomas Johnson, of Maryland, George Washington was unanimously elected commander-in-chief of the armies raised and to be raised for the defense of America.

But above all, it was here that, on the 7th of June, 1776, John Hancock occupying the President's chair, the memorable act was initiated that sanctifies the whole building. We see Richard Henry Lee, of Virginia, rise in his place. He holds in his hand instructions from the convention assembled at Williamsburg, which had been brought to him but a few days before by Thomas Nelson, himself then present as a member. Mr. Lee reads a resolution, still extant, in his own hand-writing:

Resolved [redacted]

That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved.

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FAC SIMILE OF THE ORIGINAL RESOLUTION AS OFFERED BY MR. RICHARD HENRY LEE.

Around that room are sitting men who for weeks and months have been toiling to bring their countrymen up to this point. John Adams, Samuel Adams, Elbridge Gerry, Bartlett, Chase, McKean and Whipple and Wythe, and Hewes, who was bearing the whole weight of his colony—most probably a full representation of those in favor of the resolution; while Dickinson, too, was there, the conscientious man and pure patriot, who, like his colleagues, Robert Morris, Wilson, Willing and Humphreys, restrained by their instructions, also believed that the adoption of the resolution at that time would produce divided action, and were hence opposed to it. A meager house induces a postponement until the next day, and, after a reference to the committee of the whole, the 1st of July is fixed as the day for further consideration, but "least any time should be lost in case the Congress agree to this resolution," a committee is appointed to prepare a declaration in consonance therewith. It is not the place here to enter into a detailed review of the occurrences of this period—the full history of which has been promised, and shall, in due time, appear. Suffice it for our present purposes to recall the fact, that on the 1st of July, Benj. Harrison, the chairman, reported Mr. Lee's resolution, and had, then and there, referred to his committee that declaration which Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Sherman, and R. R. Livingston had unanimously agreed upon. On the 2d day of July, the resolution adopted, the United States became a nation. Its sponsors were not yet quite satisfied with the baptismal address, which was to announce the event to the world, but finally, on the 4th of July, after anxious debate thereon, paragraph by paragraph, that, too, received the approval of all present, and was ordered to be engrossed—though the latter was not accomplished until some weeks afterward. Thus two distinct groups of eminent men have associated their names indelibly with the Declaration of Independence—first the "Actors," and, secondly, the "Signers."

The councils of Philadelphia honored themselves in April last, by passing an ordinance for the restoration of the building where these events occurred, and for setting it apart forever in commemoration of Independence.

Prompted by the right spirit, the City Fathers had already sought, in 1854, to purchase the whole of the Peale collection of

paintings, then offered at public auction. Failing in this, they bought a great number of the historical portraits, (among which there were a dozen of the signers,) and from time to time have continued to add to the collection.

Occasionally a public spirited citizen would present to the city a portrait, a bible, a casting, or a relic—real or imaginary—and it was at once stored in this room. The latter became a general receptacle for framed resolutions of councils, the abortive contribution to the Washington monument—in fact, it served as a living, ever-ready response to the often embarrassing question in councils —"what *shall* we do with it ?"* It was feared by some that the vehicle, yclept Washington's coach, might even find its way into this chamber, for here already his *horse* had been placed, prancing over the door, in such form and manner as might have justified the interference of the Society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, whose agent—had he ever seen it—not recognizing the rider, would have unquestionably exclaimed, as is his wont, "come down my gay Peruvian, come down."

Here, also, we had Brandt, the savage above all others, literally damned to eternal—infamy; Red Jacket, too, forsooth—a lot of men of whom the catalogue could say, "of liberal education and excellent moral character;" the vilest daub and caricature of General Jackson (which, by-the-bye, cannot, under the ordinance, be removed); the likeness of an obscure political agitator doing duty for Charles Lee, of Revolutionary notoriety; lithographs of volunteer refreshment saloons, etc., etc.

The first point to be attained was the removal of all portraits, relics, and other deposits not associated with the historical memories of the Hall. These, in many instances, absolutely defaced the walls, and in many others destroyed the architectural beauties of the chamber.

The janitor having carefully stowed away all the relics and a great deal of trash, the portraits, not required for illustration and adornment, were removed to the Fidelity Safe Deposit

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The very cellar was not long since used for impounding and slaughtering vagrant dogs captured in the summer season. Hon. Wm. M. Meredith ever facire to turn to account what to others would be an interruption, had his voice drowned, on one occasion, in the midst of a ceremonial reception, by these yelping, whereupon he declared the Hall haunted by the spirits of 1776, and identified the voices of Jefferson, Lee, Hancock, etc.

and Trust Company, whose president had cordially offered to take charge of them. They have been admirably displayed for public inspection on the walls of the directors' room. Great credit is due to Mr. Campbell, of Hall & Garrison, for the taste shown in their arrangement, as well as for the care taken in their transfer from the Hall.

The room with its antique wainscotting, pillars, cornices, etc., presents to-day the same general appearance as it did during those times that did indeed try mens' souls. The original chandelier still hangs there; the chair which was occupied by the President is restored to its place on the dais; in front stands the table at which Hancock wrote, and on which the Declaration itself reposed after it was engrossed, and where one after another of the members of Congress came forward and appended his signature. Near by is a chair with its original covering, well worn in the use of an individual member of the Congress. Two more of these chairs, though unfortunately newly covered for the convenience of the sergeants-at-arms of the State Senate, have been rescued and placed on the floor. On either side of the dais are ranged portraits of the following, or spaces therefor—(an asterisk denoting in each case the latter). :

John Hancock—The President.
Richard Henry Lee—The mover of the resolution for Indendence.
*Benjamin Harrison—The Chairman of the Committee of the Whole who reported the same.
Thos. Jefferson—The author of the Declaration.
John Adams—The seconder of the resolution, and the "Colossus of the Debate."
*Sam'l Adams—The "Palinurus of the Republic."
*Rob. R. Livingston } Of the Committee to draft the Declaration.
*Roger Sherman }

Benjamin Franklin, Robert Morris, Bishop White, the Chaplain; Chas. Thomson, the Secretary; John Dickinson, Thos. Heyward, Sam'l Chase, Elbridge Gerry, *George Wythe, *Edward Rutledge, Thos. McKean, George Read.

On the opposite panels are John Witherspoon, Charles Carroll, Francis Hopkinson, Samuel Huntington, Philip Livingston, Benjamin Rush, Arthur Middleton, George Clymer; with spaces for Robert T. Paine, John Penn, George Ross,

James Smith, Richard Stockton, Thomas Stone, George Taylor, Matthew Thornton, George Walton, William Whipple, William Williams, Oliver Wolcott, Abraham Clark, William Ellery, William Floyd, Joseph Hewes, William Hooper, Stephen Hopkins, F. L. Lee, Fran's Lewis, Thomas Lynch, Lewis Morris, Thomas Nelson, William Paca, James Wilson.

There will also be spaces for John Rogers, Thomas Johnson, John Jay, Henry Wisner, Geo. Clinton, Thos. Willing, Charles Humphreys, and a few others.—"Actors."

The names of John Morton, Cæsar Rodney, Carter Braxton, John Hart, and such others of the above whose portraits were never taken, will be appropriately presented in some permanent shape.

Over the very doorway through which Washington passed when he left Congress to assume those duties which earned for him his enduring title of "First in War, First in Peace, and First in the hearts of his Countrymen," has been hung an original portrait of the *Pater Patriæ.**

Along the surbase on each side of the President's chair, subordinated to the general design, are the Presidents of Congress from 1774, not included in the above category, and in similar positions on the sides, portraits of the Revolutionary officers.†

The draft of the declaration in Jefferson's handwriting is in this city, in the possession of the Philosophical Society, most admirably framed and adapted for exhibition. It is hoped the society will be induced to deposit this valuable relic upon the table in the Hall, and, also, a chair which they own, which was used by the "Delegates," and which like the one deposited by the writer in the Hall, contains the original covering. Two more of these chairs are known of, and these will, it is believed, be also ultimately restored. There will be placed in the vestibule upon its original

* The noble idea, so nobly carried out, the preservation intact of Washington's Home on the Potomac is due to the women of America under the auspices of Miss Ann P. Cunningham of South Carolina as Regent assisted by a Vice Regent in each State—in Pennsylvania by (the then) Miss Lily Macalister.

†The worthy and courteous janitor, Mr. Edwards, has become a "walking catalogue" to the treasures of the Hall, and takes especial delight in welcoming all real pilgrims to its precincts.

frame-works, the celebrated bell, which on the 8th of July, 1776, fulfilled the injunction prophetically inscribed thereon a quarter of a century before:

"PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF."

It seemed that no opportunity could be more favorable toward perfecting this great memorial of the men and times of 1776, than the approach of the centennial anniversary—no worthier coadjutor than John L. Shoemaker. True to the public spirited instinct of his namesake, who in 1765 affixed his signature to what we Philadelphians are fond of calling the "first Declaration of Independence," Mr. Sheomaker was sedulously laboring for the success of the centennial celebration; recognizing at once the propriety of the suggestion, he grasped the scheme, and has been unremitting in sustaining every effort to its accomplishment.

His Honor, Mayor Stokley, as well as Mr. J. H. Pugh, the efficient popular commissioner of city property, have cordially cooperated; while the presiding officers of both branches of councils, the ex-Mayor, Mr. King, and other members of the committee of select council, as well as Mr. Haines, have evinced much interest in the work, and thus contributed essentially toward its success. Several noble-hearted citizens have already contributed valuable portraits, or promised so to do—Philip F. Wharton; Medical Director, George Clymer, U. S. Navy; J. Francis Fisher, Edward L. Henry. The list is daily growing as the object is being understood. Philadelphia's contribution to the Washington monument will be forwarded to its destination, or be otherwise appropriately disposed of. Every means will be used to make the very atmosphere of this chamber breathe forth the command so appropriately applied by a distinguished physician of Philadelphia, on there greeting his professional friends: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

As soon as the Court of Common Pleas can be appropriately accommodated, its present chamber should be fitted up as an auxiliary to the Hall of Independence. In itself it is an historical room, used as the colonial executive department for nearly half a century before Pennsylvania became a State. The second story of this building contained the public banqueting hall of former

days; and in one of the rooms met the Convention of 1787 to frame the present Constitution of the United States. Subseqently Peale's Museum occupied this floor.* The whole building would form an admirable receptacle for the *National Museum.* Here the different epochs of our national history can be appropriately illustrated by portraits and relics.† A plan for this purpose might easily be matured and accomplished; and the centennial anniversary might then indeed behold the actual realization of the picture so gloriously and prophetically foreshadowed by the Founders of the Republic themselves, in their address to the Irish, in 1775

"The golden period, when liberty, with all the gentle arts of peace and humanity, shall establish her mild dominion in this western world, and erect eternal monuments to the memory of those virtuous patriots and martyrs who shall have fought and bled and suffered in her cause."

Fellow-citizens of the United States, let us make the one hundredth birth-day of the nation its *Golden Anniversary!*

FRANK M. ETTING.

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*The following letter contains valuable information in connection with the foregoing:

211 PRICE STREET, GERMANTOWN,
PHILADELPHIA, October 12th, 1872.

My Dear Sir: I very cheerfully comply with your request, and send you a sketch of the division of the rooms in the State House occupied by Peale's Museum, before its removal to the Arcade, in Chestnut street. The collection occupied all of the second story. The long gallery extended the whole length of Chestnut street front, and contained beside the large collection of birds and natural and artificial curiosities, the collection of portraits of Revolutionary heroes, signers of the Declaration of Independence, and others distinguished in Revolutionary history; all of which were painted by Charles Wilson Peale. They were arranged in a double row as a frieze above the show cases. The southern half of the building was divided into an ante-room, of the width of the vestibule below, used for the popular lectures given to visitors in the evening, and to a room on the right, called the south-east room, and to one of similar size on the west side, containing the preserved animals, with a frieze of portraits of the heroes of the war of 1812–15. The south-east room contained the skeleton of the "Mammoth," the great attraction of the institution, preserved animals in cases, and the collection of portraits of distinguished

†Mr. Joseph Leeds, of this city, submitted to Councils, in June, 1871, a scheme for the improvement and dedication of the entire square, which contains many valuable suggestions.

French savans, painted by Rembrandt Peale, during a residence of many years in Paris, in the days of the First Empire. In this room, in the vestibule, and in other parts of the building, were hung pictures by the elder Peale, representing scenes of Revolutionary history, together with some copies of scriptural subjects, from other painters, and a few portraits of people only remarkable for their deviation from ordinary humanity: such as the horned man, spotted negro, etc.

Being a very constant visitor for many years, the situation of everything, contained in the collection is so impressed on my memory that I think I could replace them in almost the exact position occupied by them forty years ago.

Wishing you the greatest success in your most laudable and patriotic efforts,

I remain, very truly yours, J. R. LAMBDIN.

COL. F. M. ETTING.